

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 06640 050453Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 CU-04 /064 W
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R 050408Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5429
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 6640

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, TW, US
SUBJECT: TAIPEI'S BREATHING SPELL

REF: TAIPEI 6596

1. LOCAL PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL CONCERN OVER THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS HAS DROPPED TO THAT PREVAILING BEFORE THE SECRETARY'S ASIA SOCIETY SPEECH OF JUNE 29. THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING THAT THE ROC NOW HAS A COMFORTABLE BREATHING SPACE ON THE NORMALIZATION QUESTION. EVIDENCE CITED IN SUPPORT OF THIS VIEW INCLUDE "FAILURE" OF VANCE TRIP, AMBASSADOR UNGER'S RETURN, COUNTRY DIRECTOR FELDMAN'S COMMENT THAT IT IS NOT THAT CLEAR WHETHER U.S. WILL BE ABLE TO COMPLETE NORMALIZATION, AND REPORTS QUOTING UNNAMED PENTAGON SOURCES AS SAYING THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR FURTHER MILITARY FORCE REDUCTIONS ON TAIWAN. MOST CHINESE OFFICIALS SEEM TO BELIEVE THAT THE GROC EFFORTS TO FORESTALL NORMALIZATION WERE LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION. LOCAL NEWSPAPER STORIES ALSO REFLECT GROWING
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CONFIDENCE THAT NORMALIZATION HAS BEEN SHELVED FOR THE INDEFINITE FUTURE. CNA CORRESPONDENT P.P. TANG SUMS IT UP IN A RECENT PIECE: "AS SEEN FROM TAIPEI, NORMALIZATION IS IN THE DEEP FREEZE FOR THE PRESENT." (REFTEL)

2. THIS SENSE OF RELATIVE CONFIDENCE DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE GROC HAS BECOME COMPLACENT ABOUT NORMALIZATION OR WILL REDUCE

ITS EFFORTS TO BLOCK IT. RATHER, THE ROC SEEMS TO BE USING THIS PAUSE TO RE-EVALUATE ITS STRATEGY IN LIGHT OF SUCH RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AS THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE HEARINGS, EA/ROC DIRECTOR'S VISIT, AS WELL AS AN INCREASING NUMBER OF ARTICLES BY INTERNATIONAL NEWSMEN SUGGESTING THAT NORMALIZATION HAS BEEN SLOWED DOWN IN BOTH US AND PRC CAPITALS AND THAT PERHAPS EVEN THE US HAS CHOSEN TO RE-EXAMINE ITS PREMISES.

3. COMMENT: THERE IS A GOOD BIT OF WHISTLING IN THE DARK ABOUT ALL THIS, BUT THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT OUR EFFORTS AT CONDITIONING THE ROC TO ACCEPT THE INEVITABILITY OF NORMALIZATION HAVE SUFFERED A SET BACK. RECOMMEND, THEREFORE, IF OTHER CONSIDERATIONS PERMIT, THAT WE TAKE SOME STEPS TO CORRECT THE GROWING MISCONCEPTION THAT NOTHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN SOON AND THAT GROG PROPAGANDA EFFORTS WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN BLOCKING NORMALIZATION. A TROOP REDUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE CORRECTIVE.
SULLIVAN

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